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C O N F I D E N T I A L JEDDAH 001903

SIPDIS

RIYADH PLEASE PASS TO DHAHRAN, PARIS FOR ZEYA, LONDON FOR
GOLDRICH, INR/NESA FOR KIRSCH

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SUBJECT: MOSQUE SERMONS FROM SAUDI ARABIA: YOUTH, BLACK
MAGIC, AND VIOLENCE IN IRAQ

Classified By: CONSUL GENERAL GINA ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY
FOR REASONS 1.4 (b) AND (d).

WESTERN REGION SERMONS: FROM THE GRAND MOSQUE IN MECCA

11. (SBU) From the Grand Mosque in Mecca on June 10, Sheikh Salah bin Mohammed al-Budayr delivered a sermon focusing on summer activities for youth. The imam stated that leisure activities should be used to strengthen the well-being of one's society and nation. He underscored the importance of cultural and recreational activities for youth during the summer holidays. Sheikh Budayr also stressed the responsibility of parents to make sure children engage in proper and productive activities, such as sports.

WESTERN REGION SERMONS: FROM THE PROPHET'S MOSQUE IN MEDINA

12. (SBU) From the Prophet's Mosque in Medina on June 10, Sheikh Usama Abdallah al-Khayyat called on worshippers to fear God and follow Shari'a (Islamic law). "A legal act that leads to illegal results is forbidden under Shari'a," he emphasized. If in doubt of what is legal and illegal, a Muslim should consult an Islamic scholar. "What is right is clear and what is wrong is clear and what is between is doubtful," he added. Concluding the sermon, Sheikh Khayyat said, "O God, support our oppressed brothers in Palestine against usurper Jews. The Jews have tyrannized, oppressed, corrupted, and attacked. O God, shake the land under their feet, instill fear in their hearts, and make them a lesson for others."

WESTERN REGION SERMONS: FROM THE ABDUL MALIK MOSQUE IN JEDDAH

13. (C) The imam at the Abdul Malik Mosque in Jeddah delivered a Friday sermon highlighting the negative effects of black magic. Calling black magic "haram" (forbidden), he discouraged worshippers from seeking out practitioners of magic. The imam said that God will not listen to the prayers of those who practice magic for 40 days. He provided worshippers with passages from the Qur'an to counter spells.

14. (C) The imam also addressed end-of-the-year exams for students in Jeddah. He instructed fathers to encourage their children to study and advised teachers to do their best in their jobs because "children represent the future of the Kingdom."

EASTERN REGION SERMONS: FROM THE HANBAL MOSQUE IN AL-KHOBAR

15. (C) On June 10, the imam at the Imam Ahmed bin Hanbal Mosque in al-Khobar warned Muslims of the dangers of discord and internal strife among Muslims. The imam called on all Muslims, both Sunni and Shi'a, to stand together as one unit. Referring to Iraq, he said, "Islam's enemies, led by America, stand to gain from the present situation and that is why they will do anything to keep the status quo. America has taken the side of the Shi'a in Iraq." The imam said that America claims that the Sunni Triangle, which is a creation of the American imagination, is behind the violence. According to the imam, the true reason for violence in Iraq is the strong desire by the Iraqi people to rid their country of "a foreign Christian army that has invaded and occupied Iraq."

16. (C) Along similar lines, the imam said that America, like Israel, is leading the world away from the truth. Americans, he maintained, insist that their main concerns are peace, democracy, justice, and stability in the region. The imam warned the congregation not to believe such American propaganda. America, he said, is concerned only with its interests and its hidden agenda in the region: the protection of Israel.

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